

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 20-40 are pending in the present application with claims 20, 26, 28, 33, 34, and 35 being the only independent claims. Claims 20, 22-30, 32-36, 38, and 40 are amended. Claim 21 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 26, 28, 29, and 33-35 were found to contain allowable subject matter. In view of the allowable subject matter, independent claim 20 is rewritten to include the limitations of allowable claim 29 and intervening claim 23. Similarly, claims 26, 28, 33, 34, and 35 have each been rewritten in independent form including, in each case, the limitations of the base claims as well as any intervening claims.

Amendments to the dependent claims are made to be consistent with the changes to independent claims 20, 26, 28 and 33-35.

Objections to the Abstract

The Examiner states that the application does not contain an Abstract. However, Applicant's note that the present application is a U.S. National Stage application of International Application No. PCT/DE2004/000867, a published pamphlet version of which was included in the filing papers of this national stage application. The abstract appears on the cover sheet of the published pamphlet version of the PCT application, which is considered the Abstract of the Disclosure (see MPEP §1893.03(e)).

An amended Abstract is presented which meets all the requirements. Accordingly, the objection to the Abstract should be withdrawn.

Objections to the Drawings

The drawings are objected to because the Examiner states that reference characters 13 and 44 are both used to refer to the "first distillation column". However, these two reference characters are used to indicate the first distillation column in two different embodiments, namely, the embodiments of Figs. 1 and 2. Paragraph 34 of the present application describes the first embodiment in Fig. 1 and paragraph 43 describes the second embodiment in Fig. 2. Since the reference characters are used in the two different embodiments, the two reference characters are not used to designate the same first distillation column. Accordingly, the objection to the drawings should be withdrawn.

Objections to the Claims

The claims are amended to address the objections noted by the Examiner, for which Applicant thanks the Examiner. Accordingly, the objections to the claims should now be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. §§102 and 103

In view of the above amendments to the independent claims 20, 26, 28, and 33-35, the rejections of the claims in view of prior art are deemed moot.

Dependent claims 22-25, 27, 29-32, and 36-40 are allowable for the same reasons as the independent claims from which they depend, as well as for the additional recitations contained therein.

The application is deemed to be in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is solicited.

Should the Examiner have any comments, questions, suggestions, or objections, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned in order to resolve any outstanding issues.

It is believed that no additional fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any additional fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
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